One step back could prove more efficient for agency security

Increased pressure is being placed on many federal managers to ensure their agency's safety and security. This can be an overwhelming task that covers a broad spectrum of disciplines and job titles. And with limited resources and time sensitivities, it becomes even more difficult. So where does an agency begin?

Many times agencies will start with what seems to be the most obvious area – every day, visible, physical security measures such as increased guards and concrete barriers. However, Bob Lilje, CPP (Certified Protection Professional) and program manager for Modern Technologies Corporation (MTC), says while that may indeed be a need for an agency, it may not necessarily be its highest priority or the best use of limited agency resources.

"It's important to think broadly about security programs and develop an enterprise-wide security plan," says Lilje. "It may seem relatively quick and easy to tackle the physical security issues first, but agencies should take a step back and look at the whole picture before moving forward to make the best use of their time and resources."

Multifunctional office products connect agencies, save money

As agencies' management and employees are asked to increase performance and cut costs, it's only fair they ask the same thing of the tools they use on a daily basis. For example, printers and copiers can be a pricey, yet necessary part of "doing business" that can be found in nearly every corner of an agency's office. But combining the two devices, agencies can realize significant time- and cost-savings, which can be redirected toward other mission-critical initiatives.

The scenario above refers to products in a category of office equipment called multifunctional products. Paul Crane, Vice President of Government Operations for Océ, notes that it's a growing trend government agencies are capitalizing on as they utilize equipment that incorporates several functions into a single machine, such as printing, copying, scanning and faxing. Following are some insights Crane has noted about this trend as well as some tips on how an agency can integrate the new products.

Start with Communication
For agencies interested in using multifunctional products, it's going to take cooperation across departments. Not only does the person responsible for making copier purchases have to be on board with the switch, but the IT department has to be as well. In fact, it's important to bring the IT folks in as early as possible to make sure the network can support the equipment and vice versa.

Overcoming the Hurdles
The IT department is crucial to the successful connection and use of multifunctional products. Instinctively there may be some concerns about draining resources or bogging down the network with printers, which are perceived to always be "down" or broken. However, the reality is that these products actually minimize network traffic/loads, reduce calls to the help desk and are easier to maintain than dealing with all of the personal printers and individual copiers within an office. As a result, they allow the IT staff to focus on their higher priorities rather than dealing with numerous printer issues.

Equipment Requirements
To incorporate multifunctional products into an office, it may be necessary to upgrade existing equipment. Of course, that depends on the type and age of the current equipment. For example, to connect to a computer network, a copier must be digital. If an agency has an analog machine, that piece will need to be changed to a digital model.

To conduct an equipment audit, it's best to have an organization, such as FedSource, come in and provide a free analysis. They can provide recommendations for a customized solution to fit the agency's specific needs like small- or wide-format, black-and-white or color, or lower to higher speed printing options. They can also recommend the appropriate solution for document management, archiving and scanning.

The Benefits
While connecting multifunctional office products to an agency's network takes some coordination on the front-end, the bottom line is that it will pay off by saving time and money. Savings include reducing the time and expense it takes to install and maintain printer drivers on each PC, tracking every print job so costs can be billed back to specific cost centers or agencies, and providing detailed information on user work patterns, so agencies can analyze their assets and manage their resources more efficiently.

For a free copier/printer analysis, agencies can contact FedSource.

Following are a few steps that Lilje recommends when developing a security plan:

- **Consider everything.** If all pieces of the security puzzle aren't taken care of, agencies may still be vulnerable to a wide variety of security threats from sensitive information leaks to workplace violence.

- **Bring in a third party.** They can provide an unbiased and comprehensive review of your agency's security program, looking at a wide variety of issues and how they interrelate on the overall agency security posture.

- **Check references.** When researching a third party, don't go with the first person inside your door – at least right away. Check references and make sure they clearly understand what your agency requires from them.

- **Identify your resources.** Find out if there are sufficient resources (time, materials, manpower) that can be allocated. If so, how much?

- **Define threats.** Threat definition is critical in determining where the highest priority security needs are. This is where a third party vendor will prove invaluable.

- **Allocate resources.** Based on recommendations and available resources, prioritize initiatives and assign budget and manpower as necessary.

The important thing is to not let security planning overwhelm you or it will never happen. Help is available for agencies looking for a jump-start. For example, FedSource can provide assistance by walking managers through the process and connecting them with qualified, pre-screened third party vendors. For more information, visit FedSource at *www.fedsource.gov*.

A year in planning: Implementing GPRA initiatives (Part 1 of 3)

As a federal manager, it's no secret that improving program performance and reducing waste is a top initiative of Congress as well as the Bush Administration. They're emphasized in the proposed fiscal 2003 budget and there are a variety of mandates provided by the Government Performance Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). In fact, performance is being highlighted (or lowlighted as the case may be) with scathing critiques, agency scorecards and traffic light grading systems. But as agencies review their performance in 2002 and begin planning for next year, where should their efforts go?

Following is part one of a series of three editorial stories that provide agencies with a starting point. In it, FedSource will provide insight on one of two areas where agencies can begin – strategic planning. The second part (to be covered in the May issue) will outline the second area – performance management. The third part (in the June issue) will address some specific tools and techniques that the experts draw upon for planning purposes.

Strategic planning
According to public accounting and consulting firm Clifton Gunderson, strategic planning is key to understanding where an agency is going. It concentrates on priority interests and opportunities for an agency within a given period of time (i.e., 3-5 years), rather than all possible needs, opportunities and initiatives within an infinite timeframe. By outlining these priorities and putting logical action items against them, an agency has a clear picture of its next mission-critical steps.

The approach
Over the years, Clifton Gunderson has honed an approach to strategic planning. Following is a step-by-step guide recommended for its clients:

- Assure the process starts with and remains anchored in a clear understanding of the agency's mission, vision and values.

- Involve all program operations, policy and administrative support leaders in establishing priorities.

- Integrate key functions into the planning process through formal, systematic procedures.

- Conduct a systematic environmental scan or situation audit that considers factors outside the organization.

- Emphasize mission-related outcomes and impacts in measurable goals and objectives.

- Communicate strategic and annual performance plans broadly within the organization to allow for adequate input and buy-in.

- Adopt balanced measures for planning, managing and evaluating contributions of all key functions.

- Benchmark against other organizations to set norms.

- Set targets against documented baselines, set timelines and clarify how results will be measured.

- And fully cost all resources needed to meet proposed targets, including support functions, and explore alternative sourcing strategies where desirable.

For more information on strategic planning, contact FedSource. For information on developing a performance management system, stay tuned for the May issue of *Working Smarter*.